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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2753

February 23, 1996

AGRICULTURE POLICY FOR A NEW CENTURY -- Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman opened the USDA's 1996 Agriculture Outlook Forum (February 21) in Washington saying he is optimistic because the United States has a fundamentally strong farm economy. "There will be a surge in world grain production this year," Glickman said, "based on current prices and pre-season conditions. Livestock and poultry producers may be squeezed as feed costs rise but generally they are maintaining inventories. Beef, pork, and broiler output are expected to increase." Under the continuation of the 1990 farm bill, producers would have been looking at small deficiency payments and no set asides because of higher expected prices. Glickman added, "As agriculture continues to move away from restrictive government programs to more market-oriented ones, what government does outside the traditional commodity programs will become increasingly important." Since trade, not commodity programs will define agriculture's future, Glickman said, "China is becoming an extremely important customer for a number of U.S. commodities." He noted that movement toward freer trade must continue. Bringing down trade barriers is only part of the battle. "American agriculture is the most competitive in the world," Secretary Glickman said. "It remains the role of the federal government to keep open access to world trade; to ensure research for new crops; to keep our soil sound, our water safe, our wildlife protected; to inspect food before it goes on American tables, and to make sure no American goes hungry." **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

INTERIM TERMS OF RICE PROGRAM -- Acting to ease some of the uncertainty caused by Congress' inability to pass a 1995 Farm Bill, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced (February 16) proposed terms of a rice program for the 1996 crop year. Glickman used his authority under the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act to determine program provisions. Secretary Glickman said, "I want to stress that these interim provisions are not designed to take the place of a rice program adopted by Congress. Rice producers can use these provisions as an 'insurance policy' to arrange for financing and begin making their planting decisions. In the absence of new legislation, the industry can be assured that these provisions will provide an adequate safety net." Sign up for participation in the 1996 rice program is not required to be eligible for price support. Absent new statutory authority, no deficiency payments will be made on the 1996 crop. The only benefit available for eligible 1996-crop rice would be a nonrecourse loan at a proposed minimum price support rate of \$9.50 per hundredweight. This loan rate will protect farm income and result in comparable costs to the government. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

PEANUT SUPPORT LEVELS ANNOUNCED -- USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announced (February 15) that the national average support level for 1996 quota peanuts will be \$679.25 per short ton which is up 89 cents from 1995. Farm legislation now under consideration by Congress may change the statutory provisions relative to this program announcement. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF ALASKA TIMBER LAWSUIT -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced (February 20) a proposed lawsuit settlement that will help ensure a more predictable timber supply in Southeast Alaska's Tongass National Forest. The case is Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA) v. Morrison. If approved by a federal court, the proposed settlement will release from injunction an estimated 105 million board feet (mmbf) of timber. Timber operators have up to three years to harvest timber purchased from a national forest. The AWRTA lawsuit challenged Forest Service timber sales in the Tongass National Forest originally planned for sale to meet contract obligations for the Alaska Pulp Corporation (APC). After APC closed its facility in Sitka, the Forest Service sought to offer those sales to other operators. The lawsuit forced the Forest Service to restudy the sales. The lawsuit and subsequent injunction affect approximately 280 mmbf of timber. Under terms of the proposed agreement, additional timber not released in the settlement will be subject to further environmental review before it can be offered for sale. **Contact: Jim Petterson (202) 720-4623.**

PRINCIPALS INVITED TO JOIN TEAM NUTRITION SCHOOLS -- Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman invited the principals of more than 94,000 National School Lunch Program schools to join in what he called "one of the most exciting initiatives in the history of the school lunch program: Team Nutrition." In a letter to elementary and secondary principals, Glickman urged them to join thousands of their colleagues across the country, and organizations representing food, agriculture, nutrition, and health, in working for a healthier future for America's children. Team Nutrition is a nationwide program designed to support schools implementing USDA's School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children. The program ensures that children have healthy meals at school. Team Nutrition helps schools plan, purchase, prepare and serve healthy school meals and teaches children about making food choices for a healthy diet for a lifetime. By joining Team Nutrition, schools gain access to innovative educational and technical resources that will actively involve children and their parents in nutrition education programs at home and in school. **Contact: Alicia Bambara (703) 305-2039.**

AMERICORPS ACCOMPLISHMENTS -- USDA's AmeriCorps members planted 65,000 trees in Oklahoma during 1994-95. This was a project that rooted the new national service program in the tradition of the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said, "We now have the data showing that AmeriCorps indeed is doing what national service was created to do. AmeriCorps is getting things done while strengthening communities, providing opportunity and boosting personal responsibility." The annual report indicates that AmeriCorps/USDA members in 38 states provided nearly two million hours of service. The document also indicates that 14,176 non-compensated volunteers were recruited by AmeriCorps/USDA members to serve in community service projects. USDA is running three types of AmeriCorps teams in 45 states, composed of approximately 1,350 members: an anti-hunger team, a public lands and environment team and a rural development team. **Contact: Joel Berg (202) 720-6350.**

FAX AND INTERNET -- Radio and TV listings and **Broadcasters Letter** can be accessed by calling USDA's AgNewsFax or by going to USDA's Home Page. **FAX:** Use phone connected to your fax to call **(202) 690-3944**. At voice prompts, press **1**, press **4**, then to receive **Broadcasters Letter**, press **9200**; radio newslines information, press **9250**; TV contents billboard, press **9260**; TV scripts, press **9270**. After all your selections, then press **#**, press **3**, and press the **start** button on your FAX. **INTERNET:** Letter address is <http://www.usda.gov/news/bdcaster/bdcaster.htm>.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #2021 -- In this edition, Brenda Curtis reports from the so-called "Mississippi Flyway" to describe why the duck population of this country is being replenished on the nation's wetlands. **(Weekly cassette -- five minute documentary).**

CONSUMER TIME #1500 -- Saving the ducks. Earned income tax credit. The high cost of melting ice. Lower poultry prices for consumers. Bird problems coming to roost. U.S. dairy cattle to Turkey. **(Weekly cassette -- consumer features).**

AGRITAPE #2013 -- E.U. hormone ban continues, despite WTO challenge. U.S. soybean prospects closely tied to Brazil. Report says Farm Credit System healthy. Poultry producers' profits down. U.S. dairy cattle to Turkey. **(Weekly cassette -- news features).**

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, March 5, weekly weather and crop outlook. Thursday, March 7, aquaculture report. Monday, March 11, cotton/citrus production, world cotton supply and demand. Tuesday, March 12, crop production, world agricultural supply and demand, cotton and wool outlook. Wednesday, March 13, feed outlook, oil crops outlook, rice outlook, and wheat outlook. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carry many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

ACTUALITIES: Statements include comments from Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor and USDA's Chief Economist Keith Collins made at the 1996 Agricultural Outlook Forum in Washington, D.C.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWS FEEDS: Thursdays from 3:45 to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 402R (located at 89 degrees West), Transponder 13, Vertical Polarity, Downlink Frequency 3960 MHz.

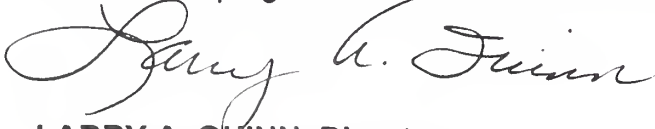
Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry Quinn, (202)720-6072, or write to: Room 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300. Internet E-mail: LQuinn@USDA.GOV.

OFF MIKE

GLOOMY FACES...were seen at a meeting of Oklahoma wheat farmers recently, reports **Carey Martin** (Oklahoma Agrinet, Oklahoma City, OK). The weather is so dry there that the Governor called for a "day of prayer for rain" last Sunday. Carey says there is a lot of blowing dust in northern Oklahoma because wheat cover is so inadequate. Many stocker cattlemen are having to ship calves to feedlots early or to pastures outside the state. Growth in hog production has increased so much that Oklahoma is now included in USDA's regular Hogs and Pigs Report. Expansion has occurred throughout the state, but Carey notes that a major hog processing plant opened recently in the Oklahoma Panhandle.

HOG WASTE CONTROL...continues to be a concern in Missouri according to **Stacy Handke** (KTTS, Springfield, MO) who was substituting for **Joann Locke** this week while she was covering a variety of producer and commodity meetings and sending back reports. An agricultural communications graduate of Southwest Missouri State University, Stacey is in her second year at the station. She works in advertising sales, but steps in to assist Joann with farm news when needed.

WHEAT SITUATION...in Nebraska doesn't look good there either, reports **Jack McConnell** (KMMJ, Grand Island, NE). He says they haven't had any measurable moisture in several weeks with only three inches of snow which came with high winds and sub-zero temperatures. With little snow cover and severe cold, the usually hardy wheat plants are struggling. Jack starts his broadcast day with a 6:00-9:00 a.m. stint at the helm of an all-talk news, weather and farm program. Then, he hosts "Talk of Nebraska" from 9:00-9:30 a.m. which has included the Governor and other staff officials recently. He switches hats and heads to KHAS-TV in Hastings, NE for the 10:30 a.m. taping of a market and farm news segment and then returns for his noon radio show.



LARRY A. QUINN, Director
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